Lord Curzon, Lord Robert Cecil, Mr. Austen Chamberlain, and Mr. Walter Long, at an interview at the War office—as they put it "to discuss certain matters in connection with the proposed arrangements."[31]

*Negotiations with Conservatives*

Here is the Minute they subsequently published of what took place at the interview.

"The Unionist ex-Ministers stressed the supreme necessity of setting up a stable Administration, and enquired what support the Prime Minister would count on from Liberal and Labour Parties. The P.M. told them that while the Liberal ex-Cabinet Ministers were understood to have promised Mr. Asquith not to join him, 136 Liberal M.P.'s had promised him their support, and that at least as large a section of the Labour Party had agreed to support the P.M. as had previously backed Mr. Asquith's Coalition. The P.M. gave particulars of his meeting with the Labour Party, and of the agreement he had reached with them, alike as to their representation in the new Government and as to its policy on matters which specially affected their interests. The new Government was assured of a favourable reception from the House of Commons, and if difficulties arose later, he would not shrink from the issue of a General Election.

We discussed in some detail the proposed constitution of the new Government, and reached full agreement as to the principle of

making the Cabinet a small War Committee of Ministers without portfolio, sitting daily to deal with the War. The personnel of the proposed Cabinet was also agreed, as were the other Ministerial appointments which the P.M. had in view.